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ABSTRACT

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The Impact of Enrollment Trends on the Role of State Coordinating Boards*

by

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College presidents throughout the country have become interested in demography, admissions strategies, and public policies concerning institutions in financial difficulty.[1] The prospect of enrollment decline is widely accepted, though educators continue to refer to the possibility with the more delicate term, "enrollment stability."

The paper argues that enrollment declines are likely to be experienced by a high proportion of institutions in a number of states. It discusses several roles that state agencies can play in disseminating enrollment projections for individual institutions, identifies one promising approach to identifying institutions headed for trouble, suggests state policies for easing institutional transition from expansion to decline, and traces some of New York State's experiences during these last several years.

Stability On Decline

Enrollment stability through 1985 has been projected both by Cathy Henderson[2] in the American Council Study and by the Carnegie Council.[3] The Carnegie Council study projects enrollment growth from 8.4 m. students in 1980 to 8.6 m. students in 1985, with a slight decline to 8.2 m. students in 1990.[4] Renewed growth is projected to the end of the century. Based upon an expected decline in the eighteen year-old population, Ms.

Henderson projects a modest 4.4% decline in the freshmen enrollments of traditional college-age students in the decade 1975 to 1985.[5] Stephen Dresch offers the most pessimistic outlook, arguing that the continuing high levels of college attendance will create a condition of "economic saturation."[6] He projects sharp declines in the mid-1980's extending for an additional decade through the mid-1990's.

Enrollment stability may be too optimistic a term to describe the enrollment outlook.

The Bureau of the Census projects that the number of eighteen year-olds will decline from 4.2 m in 1975 to 3.6 m in 1985 and a further decline to 3.2 m in 1992.[7] The decline between 1975 and 1985 is about 15%, but between 1975 and 1992, it is 24%. These declines are based upon the number of children already born. The most pessimistic estimate projected for 1995 is for 3.0 m eighteen year-olds, a decline of 30% from 1975.[8] Enrollment stability will occur only if there are compensating increases in the college-going rate of the college-age cohort or increased college attendance by adult populations.

The demand for higher education and the proportion of the age cohort continuing on to college is difficult to predict. Both New York and New Jersey have experienced declines in "college-going" rates since 1971.[9] A Carnegie Commission study identified a strong decline in the proportion of white 18-19 year old males going on to college, from 47.3% in 1969 to 39.6% in 1972.[10] Freeman reports a drop among male 18- to 19-year old male civilians from 44% in 1969 to 33% in 1974.[11] Freeman explains the reduction on the basis of a decline in the rate of return for investment in higher education, from 11-12 percent in 1969 to 7-8 percent in 1974.[12]

High unemployment rates, growing underemployment of college graduates, employment of college graduates in areas unrelated to their major fields of study could continue to discourage college attendance. The number of college graduates seeking employment is expected to increase for the next five years; unless unemployment opportunities rise, or the real cost of higher education declines, there is little reason to expect a significant reversal of the downward drift in the college-going rate in the next five years.

On the other hand, the number of older students enrolled in colleges and institutions has risen significantly between 1970 and 1975.[13] Yet, the American Council on Education study points out that ninety-four percent of all first-time full-time enrollments were under twenty years of age.[14] While institutions may seek to encourage the enrollment of older students, they face competition from school districts, public agencies, professional associations, industry as well as other colleges that now serve adult populations. The impact of population changes and consequently enrollment declines will vary significantly from region to region. The Henderson study points out that "...two-thirds of all freshman are enrolled in states...which are not projected to experience overall reductions in the number of 18-year-olds by 1985."[15] Nine states with expected declines account for 28 percent of total enrollment. The independent college sector is especially vulnerable. Over 40 percent of enrollment at independent colleges are within states expected to lose enrollments, compared to 28 percent of the enrollment in public institutions.

These data suggest that the pessimists, myself among them, tend to be located in states that (1) now enjoy high college-going rates, (2) presently enroll a large number of non-traditional students, (3) already provide open access and enroll previously underserved ethnic groups, (4) are located in an area of the country facing larger than average enrollment declines, (5) have a significant number of undergraduate liberal arts colleges, and (6) have a relatively large number of independent institutions.

New York is one such state and projected enrollments are for substantial declines beginning in 1981 and continuing into the mid-1990's. New estimates for New York State project a decline of 55,000 students between 1976 and 1985 (slightly over 10%) and a decline of 125,000 full-time students (about 25%) between 1976 and 1995.[16]

Whatever the overall trends, enrollment declines are likely to be significant for wide segments of the academic community.

Projection of Enrollments for Individual Institutions and Their Impact on Institutional Behavior

What is the likely impact of overall enrollment declines upon individual institutions?

Early in 1974, the New York State Education Department, as part of its statewide planning effort, developed an enrollment projection model that predicted enrollments for each college and university in the state through 1990 basis upon their then existing missions and the state's financing policies.[17] Each institution's enrollments were projected by estimating its enrollment share of the expected number of high school

graduates from each region of the state and from out-of-state. The enrollment share were estimated on the basis of "drawing power" for the preceding five-year period (1969-1973).

Institutions were then grouped into five categories. Group V includes institutions that were expected to continue to maintain stable enrollments or slight growth. Institutions were classified into Group V, if they accepted a small proportion of their applicants, drew 25% or more of their full-time undergraduates from outside of the state and at least one-half of their freshmen from outside of the region in which the institution was located. The assumption was made that Group V institutions could and would maintain their enrollments by adjusting admissions requirements to maintain stable enrollments. Forty-four out of 187 institutions were expected to decline by 10% or less.

The other 143 institutions were assumed to share the remaining pool of applicants. Projections for these institutions are shown in Table 1.

The following conclusions were drawn:

-- Institutions with expected enrollment declines of 40% or more include small public and independent institutions that together enrolled only 10% of the undergraduate population. The 20 independent institutions were small liberal arts colleges, that had experienced severe decline since 1969. They were not expected to survive.

-- Institutions enrolling one out of two full-time undergraduates in the state fell into the 20% - 39.9% range for enrollment decline. Half of the

TABLE 1

Summary of Predicted Enrollment Declines
of Full-Time Undergraduates at 143 Institutions
in New York State, 1973-1990

Enrollment Decline of	Number of Institutions		
	Public	Independent	Total
40% or Greater	5	20	25
30% to 39.9%	16	27	43
20% to 29.9%	16	29	45
10% to 19.9%	22	8	30
Less than 10%	16	28	44
Totals	75	112	187

Source: T. Edward Hollander, Planning for Changing Demographic Trends in Public and Private Institutions, Unpublished Manuscript, March 1975. A published version (table excluded) appears in Assuring Academic Progress Without Growth (Alan Carter, ed.) San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975, pp. 1-12.

state's independent institutions fell within these two categories. Most of the public two-year colleges also fell within this range of decline.

-- Independent colleges were most likely to suffer severe enrollment losses. Almost three out of four independent institutions were expected to experience enrollment declines of 20% or more compared to one out of two public institutions.

The projections were shared with all of the institutions in the state together with a detailed description of the methodology so that they could replicate the study. Those institutions that challenged the findings did so on the basis that they planned to change their recruitment and educational strategies in order to avoid the forecasted decline.

The results of dissemination of the study influenced institutional plans and behavior. Institutions responded in different ways.

-- Several institutions shifted the emphasis in their educational programs from those designed to serve college-age undergraduates to program designed to serve non-traditional age populations.

Examples of such institutions are Mercy College, the College of New Rochelle, New York Institute of Technology and Adelphi University.

-- Extension and outreach centers were developed by institutions that had not done so before.

-- Adult and continuing education programs were offered by institutions for the first time.

-- Recruitment and admissions functions received greater support and emphasis within the institutions.

-- Small liberal arts colleges began professional and career programs and other institutions concentrated resources in expanding their programs. The competition for students increased in intensity and promotional advertising became common.

Some of the efforts have been constructive, others, discussed below, tended to reflect on the credibility of higher education in the state.

The state's overall enrollment pattern has followed these intital projections fairly closely. For individual institutions, however, these projections are not likely to be realized. A number of institutions have responded as noted above to expand the constituencies they serve. Several institutions already have closed and their enrollments have been redistributed within the system. Several consolidations have also taken place. The publication of these data also has resulted in changes in overall financing and planning policies that will alter the outcome from the projected model.

The point is that the state coordinating board can play a catalytic role simply by providing institutions with adequate informa-

tion about possible future trends and directions. Many, though not all institutions, if provided with adequate and credible data, can respond with modified strategies and programs, that is, if they have confidence in the information available. Fear for institutional survival is one of the most powerful change-agents around.

Predicting Individual Institutions Headed for Trouble

Some institutions with sufficent lead time can explore alternative arrangements to accommodate to decline if that is their likely future. If they fail, and many may, plans can be developed for the orderly dissolution of the institution and the relocation of its students to other institutions.

Thus, the New York State Education Department has undertaken a project to identify more precisely institutions in difficulty or heading for difficulty so that it can intervene early enough to take effective steps for maintaining an institution's viability or protecting the students should the institution fail.

An initial effort to identify vulnerable institutions was based upon the Carnegie Commission's indicators of strength.[18] The Education Department has identified several additional measures of strength, based upon its experience.

An institution least vulnerable to enrollment decline shows the following characteristics:

-- attract all ages, rather than 18-21 year olds.

-- provide for significant part-time enrollments.

-- is co-educational.

-- qualifies for state support.

-- is located in an urban rather than a rural area.

-- depends to a lesser rather than to a greater degree, upon tuition income.

-- operates at or near its planned capacity.

These characteristics have been used to identify institutions within the total number that need to be monitored less intensively. These criteria, by and large, have been useful as an initial screen of institutional strength. The institutions found to be most vulnerable to enrollment decline are small, rural independent liberal arts colleges, especially women's institutions, charging high tuition and operating significantly below capacity.

A second phase of the department's efforts is the attempt to develop lead indicators that could be used to identify individual institutions headed for difficulty. Financed, in part by a grant from the Ford Foundation, the study uses extensive profile data accumulated for each institution on applicants, acceptances, enrollments, fiscal measures, debt service, tuition levels and space utilization. The study will attempt to identify measures that lead actual enrollment declines and/or predict operating deficits. Department staff members, now review the profiles periodically to identify institutions for special monitoring and management assistance.

The impact of overall enrollment changes on individual institutions is difficult to predict. Enrollment declines do not fall proportionately on all institutions within a system. Further, there is no

reason to believe that the academically strong institutions will survive while the academically weak ones will absorb the full brunt of an enrollment decline. In fact, the academically strong institutions may be competing with similar institutions for a given applicant pool on a regional or national basis. Declines in that applicant pool do not necessarily mean that the institution can or will shift its educational and admissions efforts to serve a different applicant pool.

Experience on the impact of enrollment declines between 1971 and 1975 in New York State suggests that overall enrollment declines tend to effect a limited number of institutions, while others maintain stable enrollments or even grow. In an effort to measure and be able to predict how enrollment declines are distributed, the department staff is now examining measures of "selectivity" and "yield."

Defining "selectivity" as the ratio of acceptance to applications and "yield" as the ratio of first-time full-time enrollments to acceptances, the following information can be developed and analyzed.

-- Institutional selectivity and drawing power among sectors and within sectors can be measured by the relationship between these variables.

-- Institutional vulnerability to enrollment declines can be measured assuming the least vulnerable institutions are highly selective and attract a high proportion of students they accept. Institutions with low "selectivity" and low "yield" would be expected to absorb the major share of a subsequent enrollment decline.

-- Institutional admissions patterns can be followed over a longer period of time to identify institutional response as enrollments change, providing a basis for projecting future enrollments.

In a preliminary exercise to test this approach, Paul Wing devised a matrix measuring "selectivity" and "yield."[19] Institutions were then classified along both axes as high, medium and low for each variable, with one-third of the institutions identified in each group. The theoretical matrix is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Theoretical Matrix of "Selectivity" and "Yield"

Selectivity → Low

High ↑ Yield (Matriculations/Acceptances)	Hs	Ms	Ls
H_y	H,H Prestige Institutions	M,H	L,H Attractive Open Adm. Institutions
M_y	H,M	M,M	
L_y	H,L Prestige Institutions in Transition	M,L	L,L Institutions in Potential Trouble

(Acceptances/Applications)

New York institutions, public and independent, were distributed within the matrix with this result:

Table 3

Matrix of "Selectivity" and "Yield"

of 202 New York State Institutions

Fall, 1976

Selectivity ⟶ Low

High ↑ Yield

	Hs	Ms	Ls	Total
H_y	26(13%)	18(9%)	24(12%)	68(34%)
M_y	14(7%)	29(14%)	23(11%)	66(32%)
L_y	29(14%)	23(11%)	16(8%)	68(34%)
Total	69(34%)	70(35%)	63(31%)	202(100%)

The matrix shows that the interplay of student demand and institutional offers define 13% of the state's institutions of higher education as selective and competitive (high yield). On the other hand, roughly 8% appear to be non-selective, and not too competitive.

The distribution combines widely diverse undergraduate institutions, ranging from degree-granting proprietory institutions to major multi-universities, under varying forms of governance. A differentiated scattergram (not shown) based upon governance disclosed:

-- The State University is a diversified system with above average selectivity.

-- The City University is a non-selective system, below average in competitiveness.

-- The proprietory institutions are non-selective, but they attract a high proportion of applicants offered admission.

-- The independent institutions as a sector overlap the other groupings.

The scatter diagram approach would be most useful in identifying clusters of institutions with common admissions policies.

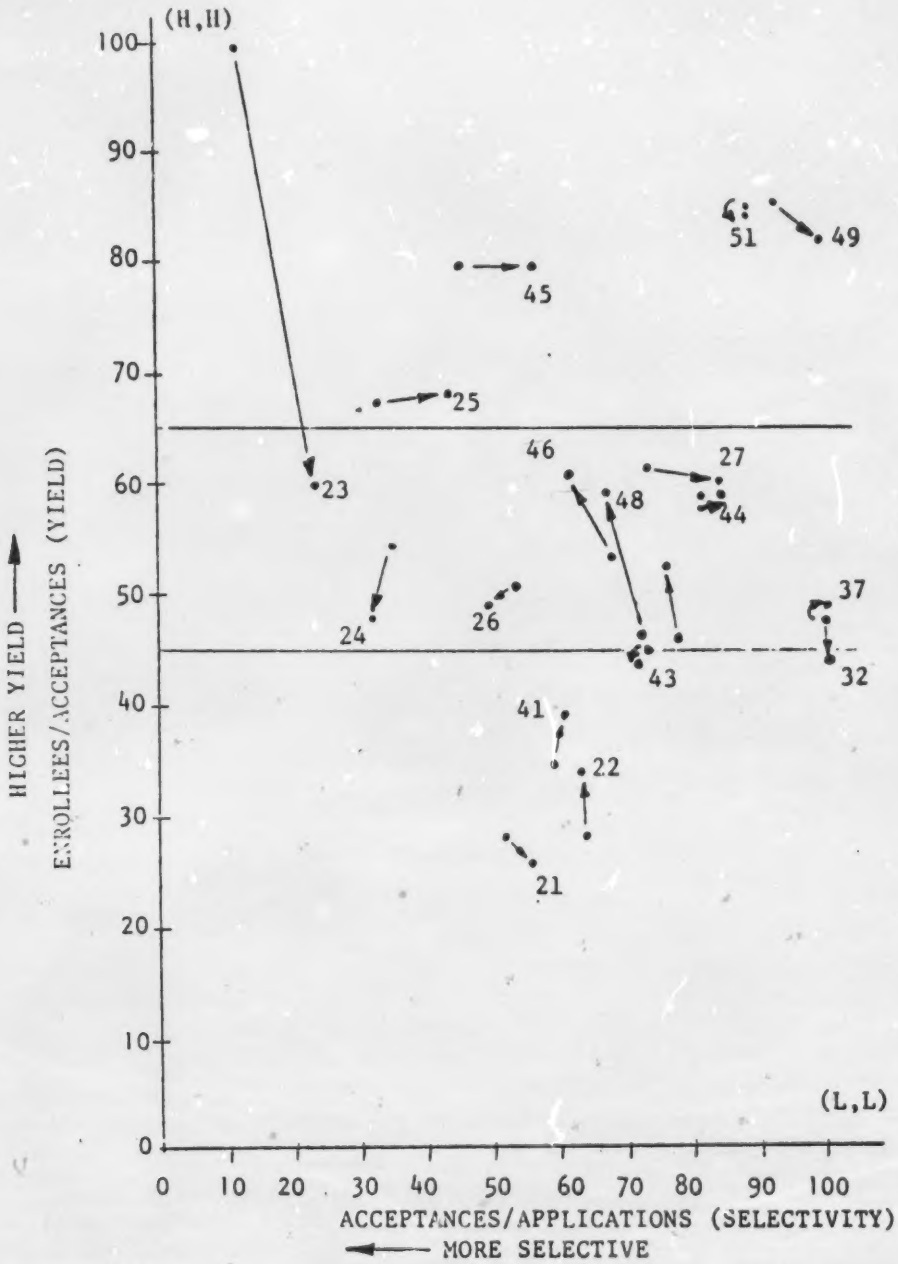
The analysis of shifts of individual institutions or selective groups of institutions over a longer period of time is more meaningful. It could serve to identify institutions headed for trouble.

Wing developed a two-year series to show the technique involved. A longer period of mapping is needed if this technique is to have predictive power. The diagrammatic portrayal of shifts between 1975 and 1976 in "selectivity" and "yield" (Illustration I), shows:

-- Lower "selectivity" by the independent seminaries, and State University's four-year and two-year colleges. "Yield" remains unchanged.

Illustration 1

Changes in Admissions Patterns for Major Institutional Categories
in New York State, 1975 to 1976



KEY

SUNY
- 21 University Centers
- 22 University Colleges
- 23 Health Sciences Centers
- 24 Specialized Colleges
- 25 Statutory Colleges
- 26 Ag & Tech Colleges
- 27 Community Colleges

CUNY
- 32 Senior Colleges
- 37 Community Colleges

INDEPENDENT
- 41 Multiversities
- 42 Universities
- 43 College Complexes
- 44 Colleges
- 45 Specialized Colleges
- 46 Health Sciences Centers
- 47 Nursing Schools
- 48 Engineering and Technical Schools
- 49 Seminaries

PROPRIETARY
- 51 Proprietary

-- Lower yields for the SUNY Health Science Centers and the SUNY specialized colleges.

-- Increased "selectivity" and "yield" by the independent Health Science Centers and engineering and technical schools.

-- Increased "yield" for the independent multi-universities and universities with a slight increase in selectivity.

-- A decline in "yield" for the CUNY senior colleges and a slight increase in "yield" for the CUNY two-year colleges.

The efforts to project enrollments and develop lead indicators to identify institutions in difficulty or headed for difficulty are important services a state coordinating board can offer to assist institutions to understand the implications of overall enrollment declines for their own planning.

Uncoordinated Competition for Students: A New Pressure for Coordinating Boards

Coordinating Boards are likely to be called upon to develop measures to maintain cooperation among institutions. Uncontrolled and uncoordinated, the increased competition for students poses serious threats to the credibility of higher education and the consequent ability to maintain public confidence and public support.

A growing number of examples have been found of colleges and universities adopting a new "hucksterism" in an attempt to maintain

or expand their enrollments. Misleading catalogues, promotional advertising, and promises of placement have been used by some hard-pressed colleges in an attempt to lure students. A number of cases have been identified of institutions awarding excessive credits for course work, recognizing life experience for credit when it is not justified, and reducing program requirements in order to attract students. A number of programs marching under the non-traditional banner on close examination seem to be nothing more than "credentialling" arrangements designed to meet enrollment goals and budgeted tuition revenues. Large numbers of institutions have developed extension programs at sites far removed from their home campuses and offered through a local administrator not employed by the college. A cynical observer might comment that "franchising" has finally come to higher education.

Increased competition poses another threat. It can increase conflict between secondary and post-secondary schools as each system seeks to offset enrollment declines by extending the age group of the constituency it serves. Conflict has occurred in a number of states over the distribution of vocational education funds, early admissions practices, and in the competition for funds to support adult education.

Finally, the competition within the higher education community has strained relations within the public sector as each institution seeks to maintain its enrollments through expanded recruitment in areas served by other public instituitions.

Universities have reduced admissions criteria seeking to attract students normally in the applicant pool for four-year colleges. Four-year colleges, in turn, have recruited students now enrolled in two-year colleges or who would normally be part of the applicant pool for two-year colleges.

Public and independent institutions in a number of states are engaged in bitter public conflict for state-support funds.

Another emerging danger is unplanned expansion of program offerings by some institutions beyond their program competence and with limited resources in an attempt to capture a larger pool of applicants.

The simultaneous expansion of all institutions into the same program areas or to serve the same non-traditional constituencies could weaken academic effectiveness by stretching each institution's resources over more diverse areas. Unless enrollments do expand, the institution's academic and fiscal strength is likely to be weakened. During the last five years, many colleges expanded program offerings in an effort to maintain enrollments without eliminating programs of declining demand.

In such cases institutional resources are spread thin, institutions can no longer maintain specialized strengths and programs proliferate to the mutual disadvantage of all students.

These problems are likely to grow as the competition for students increase. Inevitably they bring discredit to the higher education community and increase adversely our ability to maintain public confidence and support.

It may be the institutions once fearful of coordinating boards may find in them an alternative that is less objectionable to the chaos and more pernicious government intervention that is likely to result from open conflict within the education community. Whatever the agent, mechanisms are needed to:

-- Maintain minimum standards for program offerings, monitor promotional advertising, and assure adequate information is provided for informed student choice.

-- Define boundaries and operating practices with respect to the roles of secondary schools, vocational schools and colleges and universities in serving adult and other non-traditional students as well as college-age students.

-- Define more precisely the respective roles of public and independent institutions within the statewide system and provide for resolution of conflict among institutions.

-- Establish standards and approval arrangements both for branch campuses and extension centers.

-- Help establish consensus within the higher education community on budgetary and financing proposals or develop a common budgetary and legislative program for submission to the Governor and the Legislature.

Role of the State in Periods of Enrollment Decline

State policies can ease the transition from enrollment growth to enrollment stability or decline.

A number of steps can be taken to increase the demand for post-secondary education by increasing access. The broadest approach is the establishment of a state need-based student-aid program, especially for segments of the populations who are underrepresented because of economic barriers. Special programs such as educational opportunity programs can be more specifically directed at underrepresented populations. Evaluation of non-collegiate programs for possible college credit and expanded use of credit-by-examination can encourage increased numbers of adults to return to college. Special programs developed, jointly with or for industry, professional associations, labor unions, and public agencies could encourage special constituent adult groups to return to college. Student aid for part-time students could be expanded. Better information for students and simplified student-aid procedures are long overdue in all states.

States that now lose large numbers of students to institutions in other states can take steps to reduce the outmigration of students through more generous student aid arrangements for in-state study and by strengthening the quality of their educational offerings.

Both New York's present and New Jersey's proposed student-aid programs effectively reduce the cost of in-state study for state residents by requiring attendance in-state for maximum student-aid support.

State policy can be a major factor in determining whether public institutions or publicly funded independent institutions can use a period of stability to strengthen existing programs. Most funding formulas for public institutions and state subsidy arrangements for independent institutions are enrollment-driven. Institutions are under pressure to grow in order to qualify for increased public funds.

In states that anticipate overall enrollment declines, state agencies in collaboration with institutions, should seek changes in financing arrangments away from enrollment-driven models. Alternative arrangements that should be explored include reductions in budgeted enrollments and transfer of funds to support of existing or promising program areas, development of formulas for budget reductions based on variable costs, and development of cost-driven or program-driven models.

Statewide planning for the expansion of higher education served higher education needs well during expansion. It is essential during stability and decline. A well-coordinated planning system involving institutional participation can establish a rational framework for institutional planning. If the process is well conceived, it can serve to define institutional missions more precisely and assure higher education needs are met with minimum inter-institutional and inter-sector conflict. Strengthened coordinating arrangements can complement planning efforts.

Institutional academic and fiscal planning will be difficult

unless there is a well-defined and understood system for public financing of higher education. While it is unlikely that states would abandon the annual budgetary process or forward fund higher institutions, states can adopt system-wide policies for financing. Principles can be adopted that guide institutional subsidy levels, tuition charges, and student aid to provide institutions with a basis for long-term fiscal planning. The Regents in New York have developed a set of coordinated principles that guides their annual fiscal proposals.[20] While state legislatures are not likely to adopt definitive formulas, state coordinating boards can use them in the annual budget review.

Some Applications in New York State

New York is an interesting example of the changes in public policy that could result after there is widespread acceptance that future substantial enrollment declines are likely to occur and that state policy can influence the educational viability of the statewide system.

One early response by the Regents and the Legislature was the overhaul of the state's tuition assistance program. The new program, adopted in 1974, expanded access for low income students to all institutions, public and independent. The generous aid program now funded at over $200 million annually provides higher award levels for students attending independent institutions. Public sector support for the program reduces considerably the tension that had been growing between the sectors as enrollments shifted from the independent to the public sector.

The new aid program contributed, in part, to the stabilization of enrollments in the independent sector in 1974 and 1975 arresting a five-year enrollment decline. In Fall, 1976, the independent sector's share of total undergraduate enrollments rose for the first time in recent history.

A second outcome of the wide acceptance of the possibility of enrollment declines was the establishment by the Regents of a special commission on the financial problems of institutions in financial difficulty. Nathan Pusey former president of Harvard University chaired the Commission. Its report, issued in September, 1975, recommended "a State policy that permits institutions, public or private to compete under state financing policies based on fair rules of the game as they seek to attract students and serve public needs... It would mean, for example, that no special state aid be granted to any institution from any source, or any authority, unless all institutions are given opportunity to present their problems and apply for such aid."

While calling for even-hand state financial policies that would permit all institutions to compete effectively for students within a coordinated statewide system, the Commission's recommendations also sought to minimize special state intervention to aid failing institutions. In order to limit political intervention to the extent possible, the Report recommended that the Commissioner of Education establish formal procedures for investigation into the affairs of an individual institution which has severe financial problems. It further provided

for convening an outside group of experts if necessary, to investigate and make recommendations on institutions in difficulty. The use of the outside panel was designed to limit political intervention. Among the other recommendations, the Report called for procedures for the orderly closure of ineffective and unneeded institutions. The Regents accepted the principal recommendations in the Report.

It is fair to say that the Regents, the higher education community, and most public officials agree that the statewide system should be permitted to contract as enrollments decline. They reject the alternative that the state should intervene with special financial aid in an attempt to maintain the existing overbuilt system. Subsequently, this policy has been tested in a number of cases with mixed results. Several independent colleges have been permitted to close. However, the Governor and key legislators did succeed in appropriating special state aid in support of one politically influential institution.

The policy has been more difficult to implement in the public sector. In attempting to resolve City University's fiscal crisis, the Board of Higher Education proposed the merger of three existing institutions and the reclassification of two four-year colleges to two-year status. The Legislature overruled the Board's recommendations. After the smoke cleared, one merger was accomplished and one four-year college was reclassified to two-year status.

The Regents and the higher education community continue to believe that selective closures based in large measure on student choice is an educationally sound strategy for accommodating expected declines.

A third outcome of the widespread acceptance of enrollment declines was the voluntary reductions by the State University of New York in its enrollment goals and construction programs. The State University of New York has adopted enrollment ceilings for most of its four-year colleges at or near present enrollment levels. Similarly, but also as a result of fiscal exigency, the City University has sharply reduced its enrollment goals. Both systems will maintain open access for high school graduates through the community colleges.

Fourth, the Regents have adopted new and tough standards for program approval designed both to assure that existing programs meet high expectations for quality and to control shoddy program offerings developed to expand enrollments. Tougher standards for program approval also will limit unnecessary program proliferation.

A fifth outcome of concern for possible enrollment decline is the recent effort within the higher education community to achieve consensus on some basic principles for public financing of higher education. The effort, undertaken cooperatively through the Association of Colleges and Universities of New York and supported by the Department of Education and the Regents, seeks to minimize potential conflict across sector lines and assure a well-defined public policy that will facilitate planning by individual institutions. Agreement has been reached on the need to define financing programs to maintain the present enrollment balance between the public and independent sectors. The college community will attempt to reach

agreement on a fiscal plan for presentation to the Governor and the Legislature that will maintain the relative shares of public and independent institutions.

The last point deserves special emphasis. If the leadership of the academic community, across sector lines, is able to define, propose and jointly support financing and coordinating arrangements, higher institutions will be able to gain maximum political support. Such an agreement is the most effective response to potential crisis, a divided system invites decreases in public support. The challenge to achieve unity is well understood, but a consensus across sector lines has yet to be reached.

Conclusions

While stable enrollments may characterize future enrollment patterns for many institutions in most states, individual institutions and some states are likely to experience sharp enrollment declines of traditional college-age students. Until there is clearer evidence that the college-going rate will increase significantly, all states and institutions would do well to develop contingency plans based upon assumptions of reduced enrollments beyond 1981.

Opportunities for extending access to non-traditional populations through further reductions in economic and educational barriers to post-secondary education exist for many individual institutions and in some states. Even so, there is reason to doubt that these possibilities will alter significantly the outlook for most institutions especially in states facing enrollment declines.

Coordinating boards can play a constructive role in collecting, analyzing and monitoring demographic and enrollment data for the higher education community. The boards can serve important functions in monitoring institutional practices, establishing processes for orderly contraction, facilitating the development of a well-defined and coherent public policy for financing higher education and maintaining public confidence in support of the statewide systems.

In states facing enrollment declines, the role and authority of coordinating boards is likely to increase, very likely with the support of the higher education community. This enhanced role will be welcome if coordinating boards are supportive of the statewide system.

Footnotes

1. The theme for this meeting and the increased attention in the literature to enrollments, fiscal stability and planning reflect interest in this area.
2. Cathy, Henderson; Changes in Enrollment by 1985 (Policy Analysis Service Reports. Vol. 3, No. 1.) Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, June, 1977.
3. Carnegie Council, More Than Survival (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975).
4. Carnegie Council, Op. cit., p. 45..
5. Cathy, Henderson, Op. cit., p. 19.
6. Stephen P. Dresch, "Educational Saturation: A Demographic Education Model," AAUP Bulletin, (Autumn, 1975), pp. 239-47.
7. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, Nos. 519 and 601 as cited in C. Henderson, Op. cit., p. 12.
8. Based on continuation of the most recent evidence of a fertility rate of 1.7. However, the expectation is that the fertility rate could rise to 2.1. If it does by 1977, then the number of 18 year-olds for 1995 is expected to reach 3.5 m. a number close to the 1985 level. See Leon F. Bouvier, U.S. Population in 2,000 -- Zero Growth or Not. (Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau, Vol. 30, No. 5), pp. 18-20.
9. The College-going rate in New York declined from 65.6% in 1971 to 63.2% in 1975 (The Regents Statewide Plan, Albany, NY: New York State Education Department, 1976. p. 15). In New Jersey, the proportion of high school graduates who are college bound dropped from 58% in 1971 to an estimated 54% in 1974 (Department of Higher Education Data Briefs, No. 11, August, 1975, p.1).

10. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education Priorities for Action. Final Report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973, Table A-2.

11. Richard B. Freeman, The Over-Educated American (New York: Academic Press, 1976), p. 34.

12. Richard Freeman and J. Herbert Holloman, "The Declining Value of College Going," Change (September, 1975), p. 25.

13. In 1970, 410 thousand persons, aged 30-34 enrolled in college. By 1975, the number had risen to 853 thousand. U. S. Bureau of the Census, School Enrollment -- Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1975 (Series P-20, No. 303, December, 1976, p.4).

14. Cathy Henderson, Op. cit., p. 7.

15. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

16. New estimates for New York State prepared recently (March 1977) for presentation to the Board of Regents. Preliminary data were obtained from the Office of Postsecondary Research, Information Systems and Institutional Aid.

17. T. Edward Hollander, Op. cit., pp. 1-12

18. Carnegie Council, More Than Survival (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1975), p. 81.

19. Paul Wing, New York State Department of Education, unpublished study, August, 1977.

20. The Regents Statewide Plan for the Development of Postsecondary Education (Albany, NY: The New York State Education Department, 1976), pp. 110-124.